# National customs - ARGENTINA

## THE "TANGO"

Tango was born in Buenos Aires towards the end of the 19th century. It must be said that Buenos Aires was an expanding city with an enormous demographic growth rate, sustained mainly by emigration from several European countries. Those European immigrants and some "porteños" (born in Buenos Aires) made up a new social class. Perhaps as a way of identifying themselves as a group. They began to develop cultural expressions derived from this mixture. This was the start of tango, characterized by its extremely closed codes, which were only accessible to the working classes.

Songs always refer to the ordinary man and his problems, the city and memories. Thus, tango becomes a portrayal of Buenos Aires and its people. For this reason, undoubtedly, since the best of the Buenos Aires culture is carried in each song, tango gained ground abroad. Some tango musicians and singers are Carlos Gardel and Astor Piazzolla.

Nowadays, if you're looking for tango you have to visit the colorful La Boca neighborhood (the place where the tango was born) with people dancing in the streets, offering great shows and bars and restaurants with tango shows.

## THE "MATE"

Yerba mate is a popular traditional drink (90% of the argentinean population drinks mate), similar to tea. Hot water is poured over the leaves of the yerba plant (an evergreen shrub) in a mate (kind of coup), which is often decorated with silver. When the mate is filled with water, the leaves expand and fill it. People drink through a bombilla (straw with a strainer) made of silver. Mate has become ritualized in the same manner in which coffee and tea are in Western and Eastern European countries. In addition, the mate is often shared among close friends and family - using the same straw, or bombilla. Those who share mate, join in a kind of bond where the sharing of the it is a sign of total acceptance and friendship. There are sweet or sour mates, also you can put lemon or orange in your mate.

## THE "ASADO"

Most Argentineans eat four meals each day. Breakfast, lunch, tea or "mate" and dinner, where the argentineans eat plentifully. In Argentina eating is almost a cult, the variety and quality of the food produced in the country and the abundance in the argentinean fields, becomes eating and drinking a reason for meeting with friends and family. The lunch is generally held between 12am and 2pm, and the dinner is between 9 pm and 11 pm. The tradition of eating beef began in the 19th century. "Parrillada" is blood sausage, ribs and other meat grilled together and "Churrasco" is grilled steak. It is common for Argentineans to socialize over an asado, in an open fire. Also, the asado is eaten most of the times with different salads. On Sundays, family and friends usually get together to have an asado for lunch.

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## After reading the text, and say if the following sentences are true or false.

- Tango is only a national dance and only known in Argentina
- People who are born in Argentina are called "porteños"
- If you are looking for Tango then you have to visit the Nuñez neighbourhood
- Mate is a popular tradition
- Mate is drunk by people individually
- It is a symbol of friendship and acceptance
- Most Argentineans lunch between 12 am and 2 pm and the dinner between 9 pm and 11pm
- The traditiom of eating meat began in the 18th century
- "Parrillada" and "churrasco" are common meals in Argentina
- Argentinian people see the "Asado" as a way to meet with friends and family

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